



Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC)

Continuing Competency Talking Points

November 19, 2010

1. It is the purpose of the NCQAC to regulate the competency and quality of professional health care providers under its jurisdiction by establishing, monitoring, and enforcing qualifications for licensing, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms, and discipline. (RCW 18.79.010)
 - A. This is already in statute and will be implemented through the rule making process.
2. NCQAC is charged with improving and protecting the health of the citizens of Washington State through assuring the quality of nursing care in our state.
3. Competency in nursing practice is a basic element of the patient's right to receive safe, competent and compassionate nursing care.
4. Nurses can maintain and enhance their nursing skill competencies in a variety of ways, including:
 - A. Active practice 531 hours over a three year review cycle paid and unpaid.
 - B. Continuing Nursing Education (45 contact hours over a three years review period).
 - i. Presentations on a healthcare related topic
 - ii. National certification from a nationally recognized certifying body
 - iii. Nursing skills workshops
 - iv. Advanced nursing education
 - v. Publication in nursing or healthcare related journals
 - vi. Nursing research and/or independent study
 - vii. Participation in professional nursing or employee sponsored organizations and/or committees
 - viii. Completion of a nursing research project as principal investigator, co investigator, or project director. Documentation may include summary of findings, thesis, dissertation, abstract, or granting agency summary.
 - ix. Publication or submitting for publication a health care related article, book chapter, or other scholarly work. Documentation may include a copy of submitted/published article or book chapter and research.
 - x. Presentations on a health care or health care system-related topic. Documentation may include a program brochure, agenda, course syllabi or a letter from the offering provider identifying the nurse's participation.
 - C. Self-assessment and reflection means a process where the nurse assesses their active practice to determine his or her strengths and opportunities for new learning.
5. This program implementation starts on January 1, 2011, which means the clock start on the three year review cycle and is dependent on your birth month.

6. By 2014 all RNs and LPNs will be required to provide to the commission written attestation that they are in full compliance with maintaining competency at the time of licensure renewal.
7. Beginning in 2014 on your birth month you are qualified for random audits. These audits are initiated to ensure compliance with patient safety and regulatory requirements. **Each nurse who turns in their license renewal late will be automatically audited.**
8. The audit process will include opportunities for obtaining technical assistance in documenting compliance.
9. If the nurse remains non-compliant after receiving technical assistance the nurse will be referred to case management for potential discipline.
10. There is a plan to have a mechanism for retired nurses to keep their license in a "Retired Nurse Status" to use only when there a state or national emergency.
11. For more information, please join the NCQAC list-serve please see below.

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For more "Practice Information" please see our website at:
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/professions/Nursing/default.htm>

Please sign-up for the Nursing Commission list-serve:
<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=nursing-qac&A=1>

NCQAC Current Rules in progress
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/professions/Nursing/Rules.htm>